The Rev. Mr. HERVEY's

SERMON,

ON THE

Miniſtry of Reconciliation.

Preached at NORTHAMPTON.

[Price Six-pence.]

The Rev. Mr. Henry's

SERMON,

ON THE

Ministry of Reconciliation.

Preached at Northampton.

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The Miniſtry of Reconciliation: Repreſenting the benign Tendency of the Goſpel; and that 'tis the friendly Office of Miniſters, as the Embaſſadors (or Agents) of CHRIST, *to preſs Men with all imaginable Tenderneſs, Humility, and Earneſtneſs to accept the Treaty of* RECONCILIATION, *as eſtabliſhed in Him, and urged by Him, while on Earth:*

A SERMON

Preached at the Pariſh-Church of

All-Saints in NORTHAMPTON.

BY JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of *Weſton-Favell*, in *Northamptonſhire*.

We are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: We pray you in Chriſt's Stead be ye reconciled unto God. 2 Cor. v. 20.

LONDON,
Printed by Charles Rivington,
For JAMES RIVINGTON and JAMES FLETCHER
in *Pater-noſter Row*. 1759.

[Price Six-Pence.]

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS this is a poſthumous Piece it may be neceſſary to obſerve for the Satisfaction of the Publick, that Mr. Hervey *was many Years ago ſollicited to print this Sermon by ſeveral who heard it; but as he was a Man of great Modeſty, and had not* then *appeared as an Author, He could not at that Time be prevailed on by any Sollicitations to comply with their Requeſt.—However, at a particular Friend's Deſire he tranſcribed it from his Short-Hand Copy, and gave it to him.—Some Years afterwards this Friend deſired Mr.* Hervey *to reviſe it with a View of its being publiſhed; which (in Conjunction with a very eminent Divine) He accordingly did; and then returned the Copy to his Friend; telling him that as the* Meditations on the Tombs, *&c. had been ſo well received, He had* now *no Objection againſt printing it with ſome other Sermons; and that He might one Day or another require it of him again for that Purpoſe.—This Sermon is printed from that very Copy; and Mr.* Hervey *himſelf would probably have added it to the Volume, which contains his four Sermons, had He happened to recollect that it was in the Cuſtody of a Friend, who would willingly have relinquiſhed it to it's Author for Publication.*

2 Cor. v. 18.

All Things are of GOD, who hath reconciled us to himself by JESUS CHRIST, and hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation.

THE Love of GOD, that supremely glorious, and supremely gracious Being, is, of all other Tempers, the most delightful and divine. A sacred Flower, which in its early Bud is Happiness, and in its full Bloom is Heaven.—To plant this noble Principle in the Breast, to cultivate its Growth, and bring it to Maturity, is the grand End of all Religion, and the genuine Fruit of Faith unfeigned. Angels are happy, because the Love of GOD, triumphs eternally, and without a Rival, in their exalted Affections. True Believers are happy, because the Love of GOD, in a prevailing Degree, is shed abroad in their Hearts. The Gospel is a Dispensation of Happiness, because it discovers the superabundant loving-kindness of GOD to Man, and urges the most engaging Motives for our ardent Love to his Almighty Majesty.

The Gospel represents the great GOD, not only as bestowing upon his Creatures, all the Good they enjoy; but as effecting their Reconciliation to his

own adorable Self. Effecting this moſt deſirable of all Bleſſings, not barely by vouchſafing a Pardon, but a Pardon procured by the Death of his Son: and, by this enriching Circumſtance, infinitely enhanced; arrayed in all the Charms, that Heaven itſelf could give.—To render the Purpoſes of his Love more effectual and extenſive, he has inſtituted an Order of Men to publiſh theſe glad Tidings; and to invite, yea to beſeech the World, to partake the exceeding Riches of his Grace.—All which the Apoſtle has expreſſed in my Text, with his uſual Energy and Conciſeneſs; "All Things are of GOD, who hath reconciled us to himſelf by *JESUS CHRIST*, and hath given to us the Miniſtry of Reconciliation."

From which Words, permit me with all that Simplicity, which becomes a Miniſter of the humble JESUS,

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable Repreſentation of the bleſſed GOD, diſcoverable even by the Light of Nature, *All Things are of Him.*

II. To remind you, how much more illuſtriouſly the delightful Attributes of the DEITY are diſplayed in the Accompliſhment of our Redemption; in that *He hath reconciled Us to Himſelf by JESUS CHRIST.*

III. To obſerve the benign Import, and beneficial Tendency of the Goſpel Miniſtry, expreſſed in that remarkable Clauſe, *He hath given to Us the Miniſtry of Reconciliation.*

I. The

First, Then let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable Representation of the blessed GOD, discoverable even by the Light of Nature, *All Things are of Him.*—Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens are his, with all their Hosts. Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, all the happy Beings, that sit at the Fountain-Head of Felicity, were produced by his Power, and are supplied with Blessings from his Hand, are filled with Joy from his Countenance.—If we trace the various Emanations of Comfort and Advantage, that refresh our lower World, we shall find Reason to acknowledge with the Psalmist, "All our fresh Springs are in GOD." The Day is thine, says the same sacred Writer, and the Night is thine; Thou hast prepared the Light and the Sun. The magnificent Luminaries in the Sky, are Lamps of the LORD; hung up on high, to dispense the chearing Gift of Light, amidst all the Families of Nature. The Interchanges of Night and Day, with the Vicissitudes of revolving Seasons, are his Ministers; all sent on Errands of Kindness, and bringing the most valuable Presents in their Hands. The innumerable Variety of living Creatures, and of nutrimental Vegetables, are the Portion, not which our own Industry has procured, but which our heavenly Father's Bounty has settled upon us.

Every great Endowment, bestowed on the Children of Men; every noble Atchievement, accomplished by renowned Personages; these derive their Original from the uncreated Fountain of Perfection and of Power.—If *Solomon* is possessed of enlarged Wisdom, and kingly Qualities; he expressly acknow-

ledges, It is from the LORD, ſuperintending human Affairs, that ſuch Kings are advanced to reign; and by the LORD enlightening their Minds, that ſuch Princes decree Juſtice. If, at one Period, *Nebuchadnezzar* purſues his Conqueſts with irreſiſtible Impetuoſity, it is to ſcourge the offending People of the LORD; and baniſh Idolatry from their Worſhip, as the driving Wind ſwept the Chaff from their Floors. If, at another Juncture, *Cyrus* is equally victorious, and "comes upon Princes as upon Morter, and as the Potter treadeth Clay;" it was the LORD of Hoſts that raiſed up this accompliſhed Commander from the Eaſt, and bid him execute his Deſigns of reſtoring Love to his reformed Nation. — All thoſe Arts which meliorate, and Sciences which embelliſh Life, even theſe are from the LORD, "who is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in Working."

The Time would fail me to enumerate Particulars. — Whatever is beneficial to Communities, or comfortable to Individuals; whatever ſprings from the Rain of Heaven, or is produced by fruitful Seaſons; whatever adminiſters to the Improvement, or chears the Heart of Man; all, all acknowledge GOD for their Author. He is the Giver of every good and perfect Gift. The whole Earth is filled with the Profuſion of his Beneficence. And where, where is the Creature, that has not taſted, that does not ſubſiſt on, the inexhauſtible Stores of his Bounty? — And though Affliction alſo comes from the Father of our Spirits, yet this is no Derogation from his tender Mercies. Since He chaſtens, not with an arbitrary Severity, but with a parental Pity;

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He chaſtens, only to amend; and theſe light, theſe tranſient Tribulations, are Preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal Weight of Glory.

And is not ſuch a Being worthy of our higheſt Admiration, and our devouteſt Love? Has He not, by ſuch ineffable Excellencies, ſuch unmeaſurable Benignity — Has he not an undoubted Claim, to the Affections of our Hearts, the Praiſes of our Tongues, and the unintermitted Services of our Lives? He is the Source of all our Good; ſhould He not be alſo the Center of all our Gratitude, and of our whole Obedience? — But, our Obligations will riſe immenſely higher, if we conſider,

Secondly, How much more illuſtriouſly the delightful Attributes of the DEITY are diſplayed in the Accompliſhment of our Redemption; in that *He hath reconciled Us to Himſelf by JESUS CHRIST.* — Man was created upright, immaculate, and in the Image of GOD. Heavenly Wiſdom ſhone bright in his Underſtanding, and true Holineſs ſat enthroned in his Heart. — But how ſoon, and how fatally, did He fall! From what Height of Perfection, to what Depth of Degeneracy! Since that deſtructive Tranſgreſſion, all Fleſh has corrupted his Way; every Man is become brutiſh in his Knowledge; and the Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart, is only evil continually. "Our Iniquities ſeparated between Us and our GOD, and our Sins hid his Face from Us," as from an abominable Object. Nay, our Sins accuſed Us at his righteous Tribunal, and, like the Blood of *Abel*, cried to Heaven for Vengeance. Vengeance and fiery Indignation was our expected Doom, and eternal Death the Wages due to

our

our Offences. — What rendered the Miſery of Mankind ſtill more exceſſively deplorable, and only not deſperate, was, That They *were without Strength*; without any Power to make Satisfaction for their Provocations, or extricate themſelves from this Abyſs of Woe. — Oh wretched, wretched Man, if left in this State of Guilt and Ruin! If abandoned by the GOD, from whom Thou haſt ungrateſully revolted, better had it been for Thee never to have exiſted.

But, behold the Kindneſs and Love of GOD our Saviour! Hearken to the Sounding of his Bowels and of his Mercies towards Us! "I have ſeen, ſaid He, (as in the Caſe of enſlaved *Iſrael*) I have ſeen the Affliction of my fallen Creatures. They have undone themſelves, but in me * is their Recovery. Satan has deceived, and deceiving has deſtroyed them; but I, even I will deliver them."—Wherewithall will the LORD, accompliſh this Deſign of his free, unmerited Goodneſs? By the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats, or of all the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills? Contemptible, to the laſt Degree, are ſuch beggarly Oblations; only ſo far as they typefy the all-glorious Sacrifice. — Was an Angel charged with this important Buſineſs, or the higheſt Seraph bidden to interpoſe as the Repairer of our Breach? The Angels were abſolutely incapable of executing ſo great a Work. It required a far abler Agent, to negotiate our Reconciliation. It muſt coſt incomparably more, to redeem guilty Souls. Therefore the GOD of our Salvation "laid the Help upon One that is mighty." He appointed,

* See Hoſea Ch. xiii. 9.

to

to the moſt momentous of all Offices, the moſt illuſtrious of all Beings. He appointed his own Son, the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.

Behold then the Son of GOD, taking our Nature, that he may act as our Mediator. Admirable Conſtitution! full of Wonder, and full of Grace!—How joyful to the Sinner! The Work muſt infallibly proſper in ſuch Hands. Such a Surety cannot fail of ſucceeding, in all he undertakes.—How gracious in the Father! Could there be a ſtronger Aſſurance, or a more emphatical Demonſtration of his boundleſs Beneficence, than to ſend the Son of his Boſom; the Son of his eternal Delight; the Son, dearer to Him than all Worlds?—How condeſcending in the Saviour. Would *Ahaſuerus* abdicate his imperial Diadem, or the great Ruler of *Babylon* forego the Honours of his enlarged Dominion, to attend on the Welfare of ſome ignoble Captive that grinds at a Mill, or of ſome infamous Malefactor that is chained in a Dungeon? Yet the everlaſting Potentate of Heaven and univerſal Nature, undertakes a more humbling Office of Friendſhip, for a Race of abject Creatures, that dwell in Duſt, and were doomed to Hell.—Let every Child of *Adam* look unto *CHRIST* by Faith, as all the People of *Iſrael* looked unto *Moſes*, when he went into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to intercede before the LORD. (See *Exodus* xxxiii. 8.)

We have ſeen the *Perſon* reconciling, let us next contemplate the *Manner* of Reconciling. A Subject equally aſtoniſhing and delightful! The Father reconciled Us to himſelf, by laying upon his Son the Ini-

Iniquities of Us all: by admitting him to ſtand in our Stead, and by exacting from Him, the Puniſhment which we had incurred.——GOD reconciled Us to Himſelf, not only by the Humiliation, but by the Suffering of this Prince of Heaven: and not by ſome ſlighter Suffering, but by his ſuffering unto Death: and not by his undergoing a common Death, but the moſt ignominious and tormenting of all Deaths, the Death of the Croſs. "It pleaſed the Father, ſays the Apoſtle, to reconcile all Things to himſelf; making Peace by the Blood of the Croſs."——Becauſe, we deſerved Shame; the LORD of Glory was numbered with Malefactors, and loaded with Infamy. Becauſe, We deſerved the Bitterneſs of Death; the LORD of Life endured the Pangs of Diſſolution, in their unabated and moſt racking Extremities. Becauſe, We were obnoxious to the Curſe of the Law, therefore the ever-bleſſed "JESUS delivered Us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for Us."

Glorious Propitiation! and altogether as complete as glorious! What now ſhall terrify the true Believer? What ſhall ſtand between Him, and his eternal Hopes?——Shall Satan muſter up his Accuſations, and ſet them in frightful Array? Yet, though there may be much Guilt, there is no Condemnation, to them that are in *JESUS CHRIST*. —Does the Law take the guilty Mortal by the Throat, and with its rigorous Severity, ſay, "Pay me that thou oweſt?" It is paid, fully paid by the Intervention and Suretiſhip, not of a mean Man, but of the mighty GOD made Fleſh.—Does divine Juſtice demand Satisfaction, for the Wrongs received

from

from Sinners? It is not only satisfied, but most awfully glorified by this wonderful Oblation.—In short, this is a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World. It vindicates the Honour of GOD's Holiness. It displays his unsearchable Wisdom. It manifests his unutterable Goodness. It gives the most magnificent and lovely Lustre to all the divine Perfections.—May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his inestimable Propitiation, venture to adopt the Apostle's Challenge? "Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that justifieth;" not imputing our Trespasses unto Us, but transferring them to his dear Son. "Who is He that condemneth? It is *CHRIST* that died," and by his precious Death hath made Reconciliation for Iniquity, and brought in everlasting Righteousness.

I have been the more copious upon this Subject, because it is not only the grand Point in my Text, but is the very Heart of the Gospel; the Fountain of all our Comforts, and the Foundation of all our Hopes.——But I proceed, and with greater Brevity,

Thirdly, To observe the benign Import, and beneficial Tendency of the Gospel Ministry, expressed in that remarkable Clause, *He hath given to Us the Ministry of Reconciliation.* Here, I am not attempting to magnify my Office, or to aggrandize the ministerial Character; but only to render our Services *acceptable* to our Brethren.—Some Persons, whether through Prejudice or Mistake, are apprehensive of being terrified by our Message, or "tormented before the Time" by our Doctrine.

But,

But can the News of Reconciliation to the LORD GOD of Hosts terrify, or the Offer of Remission of Sins torment?—How welcome should be the Approach, or to speak in the elegant Language of a Prophet, "How beautiful the Feet of Him, that bringeth good Tidings!" And can there be better Tidings, more reviving, or more transporting, than those of the everlasting Gospel? Which saith unto Sion, "Thy Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin purged:" thy GOD is reconciled, and instead of abhorring Thee as a Rebel, is willing to embrace Thee as a Child.—When our Armies have been in the Field, and some very important, some decisive Engagement drawing near; with what Eagerness have you expected, and with what Delight have you received, the Account of a complete Victory gained? And is not our Report equally worthy of all Acceptation; which declares Satan vanquished, and Sin destroyed; declares Death abolished, Hell deprived of its Prey, and all the rich Advantages of Peace with Heaven restored?——When *Peter* lay bound in Prison, was the Angel an unwelcome Minister, who struck away his Fetters, opened the Gates of Iron, and transmitted Him, free and unmolested, to the cordial Salutations of his Friends? As You are All, by Nature, in Bondage to Sin, our Business is, to take You by the Hand, and lead You out of this ignominious Slavery, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD; while the Spirit of the most High breaks off your Shackles, and makes you free indeed.——What Manna can be more refreshing than such a Message? What Balm more healing than such a Service?——If, at any Time, we are the most Worthy

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with Terror, and denounce the Vengeance of GOD, on every Soul of Man, that doeth Evil. This is only to awaken You from that gay Inſenſibility, which would lull You into irretrievable Ruin. It is like the gathering Clouds, and the diſtant Burſts of Thunder, which might warn *Noah* to retire into the Ark, before that infinitely more tremendous Deluge came, which was to ſweep the careleſs World away. —Whether therefore We diſplay the Allurements of divine Love, it is for Your Delight; or whether We bend the Bow of divine Indignation, it is for Your Benefit: to win You to Happineſs, or drive You from Miſery. So that in every Reſpect, and by all our Miniſtrations, We are to be "Helpers of Your Faith, and Furtherers of Your Joy."

And let not any One ſuſpect, that a Meſſage of ſuch free and rich Grace, has a Tendency to ſoothe Men into Supineneſs, or ſerve the Cauſe of Licentiouſneſs. It is, of all other Expedients, moſt effectually calculated to reconcile Us to GOD, in another Senſe of the Word: to ſubdue our Enmity, and captivate our perverſe Affections; to impreſs our alienated Hearts with adoring Gratitude, and engage our refractory Wills to dutiful Obedience.——For, can We be cold and indifferent to ſuch immenſe Benignity? Can We affront and grieve ſuch unſpeakably tender Kindneſs? What Effect had *David*'s Clemency, in ſparing *Saul*'s Life, when it was in the Power of his Hand, to have diſpatched that implacable Enemy? It overcame, for awhile, even Malice itſelf: it fetched Tears of Sorrow from the Perſecutor's Eyes, and Expreſſions of the moſt endeared

Affection from his Lips *. And when GOD, the GOD to whom Vengeance belongeth, not only ſpares Us guilty Wretches, but puniſhes his immaculate Son in our Stead; when He bids the Sword of Juſtice paſs by our devoted Heads, and ſheath itſelf in the Heart of his beloved Son; can We reſiſt ſuch heavenly Goodneſs? Can We ſpurn ſuch Bowels of Mercy? Muſt not Love, ſo divine and infinite, melt even the moſt obdurate Heart; make Us fling down, with Abhorrence, the Weapons of Rebellion, and conſtrain Us, ſweetly conſtrain Us to Obedience? †

Let me now, conformably to my ſacred Commiſſion, beſeech you all to be reconciled. Eſpecially let me beſeech, the humble Penitent, and the haughty Self-righteous moraliſt.—Ye humble Penitents, that are convinced of Sin, and mourn for Sin, be of good Comfort. GOD has abounded in the Riches of his Grace towards you, and has given you a Ranſom to rely on, of higher Dignity than all Heavens, of more Value than all Worlds. The Men of *Tyre* made *Blaſtus* the King's Chamberlain their Friend ‡; the GOD of Glory has conſtituted his dear Son, your atoning Sacrifice, your prevailing Advocate. The Men of *Tyre* deſired Conditions of Peace; the LORD JESUS hath both obtained and fulfilled the

* 1 Samuel xxiv. 16.

† Mr. *Hervey* had added by Way of a Note the following Words in the Copy which He tranſcribed, and from which this is printed. "When I preached this "Sermon, I recapitulated in this Place, as you, or "any Reader may do if he pleaſes, the preceding "Heads, but I thought it unneceſſary to tranſcribe "them."

‡ Acts xii. 20.

Condi-

Conditions of your Peace. Could there be a more glorious Person chose to act as your Reconciler, than the Prince of Heaven, and Heir of all Things? Could there be a more effectual Method of Reconciliation, than his Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Cross?—Fly then to this All-sufficient Redeemer. Rely on his most meritorious and satisfactory Sufferings. Be your Sins ever so numerous, ever so enormous, these need be no Bar to your Acceptance. For GOD has received an Atonement: an infinite Atonement GOD has received. So that He can admit you to his Favour, unworthy as you are, without the least Blemish to his avenging Justice. He can, He will admit you, as freely, as if you had never done amiss. Trust therefore in your reconciling Saviour. Place a chearful Confidence in his propitiating Merits. Only let the Grace of GOD, which has appeared with such transcendent Loveliness in the bleeding *JESUS*,—let this Grace teach you, with a prevailing Efficacy, to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present World.

As to those of a contrary Character, who are righteous in their own Eyes, what shall I say? Shall I decry the Exercise of Morality, or disparage the Duties of Holiness? GOD forbid. The Gospel is a Doctrine according to Godliness, and true Holiness is the Health, is the Happiness of the Soul? These Duties issuing from Faith, and recommended by the Intercession of *CHRIST*, are acceptable to the divine Majesty. But these are not your Saviour. GOD has not reconciled the World to Himself by their

their own pious Practices, but by his Son *JESUS CHRIST*.—Can your charitable Deeds expiate your innumerable Offences? As soon may a single Drop of pure Water, correct and sweeten the unfathomable Brine of the Ocean. Can your defective Performances satisfy the Demands of a perfect Law, or your wandering Devotions screen you from the Displeasure of an injured GOD? As well may your lifted Hand eclipse the Sun, or intercept the Lightning when it darts through the bursting Cloud.—There is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to GOD, and saved from Wrath, but only the Name, only the Name remember of *JESUS CHRIST*. Here fix your Hopes, and you shall never be disappointed. Fix them on any other Object, and everlasting Confusion will ensue.—We beseech you therefore, in GOD's Stead, We beseech you for your own Soul's Sake, reject not this abundant Mercy, neglect not this *GREAT SALVATION*.

Now unto Him, who has reconciled Us to himself, and washed Us from our Sins, in his Son's Blood, be Glory and Thanksgiving, Love and Obedience, henceforth and for ever.

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